<Presentations Day1>Comment

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Comment

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Since I am myself a little bit more like an analog person, from a position outside of the digital specialized world, I would like to leave a very short comment here. In terms of digitalized humanities there are key ideas which we always refer to: the most frequently quoted ones are perhaps database and network. As I understand that most of the people here are coming from an architectural background, where visualization becomes important, yet, visualization is not only important in the architecture field but also in any kind of scientific research. Today, visualization has a large meaning to the digitalized world and is indispensable to the discussion here.

Based on these basic ideas we can draw some key issues: to establish a database and the data mining are key issues from my experience. "Quantity is quality" is always a kind of catch phrase to encourage students and young scholars to collect architecture data. If the quantity of data is enough it is already a kind of quality. So data mining becomes a very fundamental issue here, as well as platform. Here, in each and every presentation we can see varied sorts of networks, different kinds of networks already established in the digitalized world. Each network is connecting and gathering people established through varied types of platforms which sometimes generate an arena of rich debate.

Corine's presentation of Japarchi shows a very important example on how to establish a platform between two countries, such as Japan and France, which are geographically apart, but mutually connected through this platform at any time and any place, and the result is very fine. This is an example to show the platform is a key issue.

Today's presentations are not always focusing on the representation of architecture, however, I will primary refer to this topic. For us, architectural scholars how to represent architectural spaces is a very big issue. Not only in terms of research but also for the establishment of architectural education, how to represent and how to circulate architectural ideas is a very important issue. Basically we have some common methods to make architectural plans. In the analog world, the plan is one fundamental method to circulate architectural ideas, but also some photographs are quite useful. Some Japanese Architectural magazines, like A+U or GA, are successful media to circulate architectural photographs. Some recent studies evolved through specific collaborations between architects and photographers, which demonstrates an importance of visualization.

Architectural press and media are very innovative today thanks to the development of digital technologies. From my limited experience I'd like to refer to some examples, first one is Hanoi Area Informatics Studies organized by Prof. Shibayama, who is retired now, an emeritus professor of Kyoto University. Area Informatics is a new terminology introduced by Prof. Shibayama who has a background of informatics, and who developed a large collaboration with History and Humanities scholars especially History of Southeast Asia in this center, in collaboration with Prof. Sakurai, a specialist in the field. In this Hanoi Area Informatics Studies we identified many kinds of stone steles inscriptions and also collected some geographical data, architectural data and related them one by one. We integrated all this data to create a 3D database, and also a 4D database (which normally means, the 3D plus the time scale), but here it was perhaps a 5D database which was possible because we collected the surface's geomorphological data, along with the below-the-surface data, namely the geological data was also collected. Hanoi, the capital city of Vietnam, it has a history of more than 1000 years and is located on the red river delta. The city is growing on a delta region so this means that a small difference of the contour is crucial to establish the human environment, for distributing the location

of each stone stele. The oldest one is a record that dates back to the 7th or 8th century, and the recent ones to 19th and 20th century. The distribution of stone stele is very much related to the contour and the geographical data. To understand this kind of relation, we collected enough amount of data, more than 100 or 200 pieces of inscriptions, which are still preserved in this center.

Another example is collecting travel paths of an architect, which is one of my past personal projects supported by a funding of JSPS. Here I focused mostly on one specific architect, who was once active in the 19th century Yokohama, this was the opening port era. His name was Richard P. Bridgens. Until that time, his middle name was only identified with a P. In the course of my research I identified that the P. of the middle name is a reference to "Perkins" and it is all thanks to an existing database created by the University College of London. The name of the database is "Legacies of British Slave-ownership". Maybe the name is due to a dark side history but in the database there is so much that we can find, for example rich people, foundations and estate owners, who were once traveling from England to the Caribbean countries, or "The New World", including the United States. So when I utilized this existing database I could trace the travel path of this architect. He was born in England, and then traveled to the United States, from the East Coast and Pensilvania, transferred to San Francisco and finally he reached Yokohama in 1964, where he designed the first railway station in Japan both in Shinbashi and Yokohama. This means he is very important person in terms of Japanese modern history but unfortunately we didn't even have his middle name before now. When we had identified this person's genealogy we would need to research directly at San Francisco and Pensilvania, and then check the Church records, so there is so much that we have to do. But thanks to the modern technologies we can find and trace the path of one specific architect by only using the computer. And it was a very successful test. Following this example I had proceeded with more genealogical studies of this kind of adventurer architect that once joined the building of modern cities like Yokohama, Tokyo, Osaka, and Kyoto also. Because only one part of these adventurer architect-engineers is identified. But thanks to the modern technologies this kind of statistics maybe are going forward quickly.

The third example which is a recent project that just started, named mASEANa Project. mASEANa meaning: Modern ASEAN Architecture project, which connects the people of the ASEAN countries such as Singapore, Thailand, Myanmar, Laos or Cambodia, the people who do modern architecture studies. Of course each and every country, including ASEAN countries, have their own architecture and the definition of architecture and of modern architecture differs from country to country. So that is why small "m" for modern and the last "a" for architecture instead of capitalized letters. On the other hand, ASEAN has the definition already established, so that is why we call it the mASEANa project. It is on the starting point and just in the last week I travelled to Myanmar to meet architectural scholars in Yangon and Mandalay, and connecting people through modern technologies, such as: Facebook and Messenger, which are very efficient means for connecting people. It became much easier than the existing traditional e-mail. Travel to visit houses in Myanmar is still costly and takes much more time, but thanks to this modern technology communication with these local scholars, and local architects becomes much easier.

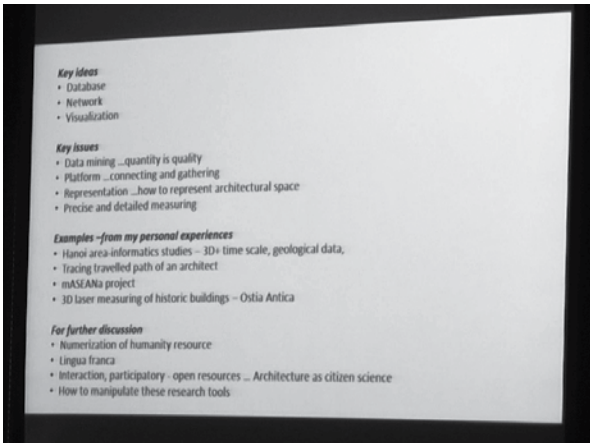

Fig.1 Slide presented during the symposium

For today's discussion it might be less concerned, but the fourth one is very important in terms of architectural studies that is the visualization. 3D laser visualizing for historical buildings is a very innovative idea. Architectural historical studies, example the "Ostia Antica" located in the suburb of Rome, the project was organized by Prof. Hori in Kyushu University. For the same purpose, we can use traditional tools like measures, pencils and scales, as architectural students in training, for example at Akashi College having trained them with these kind of methods. But using the 3D laser technics we can have more precise measuring. It is a very surprisingly innovative tool as we can even identify each piece of brick (not only the size, but

also location, height, etc.). This means that using this result we can make use of more detailed information for historical studies. For example, we can identify in which phases the bricks were layered. The first layer, the second layer etc. So, we are now able to collect more precise data comparing to traditional methods. This is perhaps one of the biggest contributions to the architecture scholars from digital humanities.

Following these experiences, I here show some points for the further discussions:

- Numerization of the humanity resources: because we all know that humanities resources, such as transcriptions and literature scripts and old paintings are very difficult to numerize. For a digital analysis, we must numeric each kind of resource. For example, from the Hanoi Area Informatics we have collected stone stele inscriptions. One method is to identify the inscription written in Chinese characters, so we can identify each other by numbering every Chinese character, but we can not choose this method because it was too much work and we did not have so much human resources at that time. But we could numerize the location of each stone stele, geographical position and elevation, geological data, and year of inscription. So combining this kind of chronological and geographical data, we can identify in which time the stone stele was established, which means the place that people have settled at that time. So, all this combined that allow us to visualize how the growth of human settlements followed chronological processes. Besides the numeration of resources, we also have to secure the integrity of the resources, and these two points are a little bit difficult to deal with.

- Lingua franca: when we have to distribute the results we have to decide which language shall be used. Perhaps today the lingua franca here is Portuguese? I guess. Also in the digital representation, what kind of tool we can use according to the language of communication is very important for the database and for the visualization of pictures;

- Network and Platform: for interaction and participatory, open resources are very important for the time being. Architecture as a citizen science is a very big issue that we are confronted with, because up until now, most of the people from the architectural background think that architecture and the design of architecture is a kind of "black box" initiated by only talented architects. But I think that for today's digitalized society, architecture as citizens' science must be developped as an idea. Thus, participation in the design of architecture has become very important and we can find many examples not only in Japan but everywhere. All over the world there are examples of participatory projects mainly in public institutions and buildings all thanks to the modern technology.

How to manipulate these research tools not only for the architects but for practitioners or educational systems is still ongoing issue.We must develop many tools for the future.